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Long Beach Unified Adult School faces cuts, fee hikes

By Kevin Butler, Staff Writer

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LONG BEACH - Budget cuts to Long Beach Unified School District's adult education programs may result in higher class fees and fewer course offerings next academic year, district officials said.

Two programs - the Long Beach School for Adults and the Regional Occupational Program - are each being cut by \$700,000 as part of a \$32.6 million package of budget reductions that the school board approved last week.

The School for Adults offers various classes, including computer classes, high school credit classes, as well as language courses for people who are still learning English.

The school also serves current high school students, who can retake some classes to recover credits to apply toward their diplomas.

The Regional Occupational Program, which serves mostly high school students, provides career-training classes and work-based learning opportunities, such as internships.

Budget cuts will force the programs to make tough changes, such as reducing offerings, said Matt Saldana, principal of ROP, the Long Beach School for Adults and career and technical education.

"Any time you hit a program with a reduction like that you are going to reduce the number of offerings," he said.

Both programs already have seen budget cuts from the state, forcing ROP this year to reduce its offerings by about 30percent, he said. In response to cuts, the School for Adults does not plan to offer a summer session in 2010, he added.

Adults can be charged fees for both programs, but high school students attend free. Fee increases to adults will help offset some of the budget cuts, he said.

"There may be some dramatic increases," Saldana said. "But the fees that we charge still will be under the market value for comparable programs at proprietary schools."

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The specifics of any proposed fee increases have not been determined, he said. Fee hikes would have to be approved by the school board, he added.

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